

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application as filed. Claims 1, 4-12 and 16-17 are amended, claims 13-15 are cancelled (without prejudice or disclaimer) and claims 18-26 are added herein.

Claims 1, 16, 18, 19 and 20 are independent.

The pending claims are modified to eliminate means-plus-function recitals and, in the case of claims 1 and 16, for clarification.

New claims 18-26 are added to recite the invention in a somewhat different manner.

It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

Claims 1 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, 2nd paragraph, as indefinite.

Claim 1 and 16 are amended to address the note concern. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the indefiniteness rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 13-15 stand rejected as directed to non-statutory subject matter under 35 USC §101. It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is moot in view of the cancellation claims 13-15.

Claims 1-12 and 16-17 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b), as anticipated by Yoseloff et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,311,976). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As asserted in the official action to which this response relates, Yoseloff does disclose a server connectable via a communication line to gaming machines, and that each of the gaming machines performs a combination-making game using a matrix having a number of rows with at least two cells and a number of columns with at least two cells, with the rows and columns having an equal number of cells. It is also

acknowledged that each cell of Yoseloff has an allocated symbol, and that each corresponding cell becomes effective if its allocated symbol is selected by a main lottery.

However, Yoseloff discloses a reel game (like reels of a common slot machine), and therefore the symbols are not, and have no need to be, selected with respect to each cell by a lottery.

In this regard, the claims of the present application require that a symbol be first allocated to each cell by lottery, and that the allocated symbol be selected by another lottery to make its cell effective. For example, claim 1 recites that "each corresponding cell becomes effective if the allocated symbol to the corresponding cell is selected by a main lottery."

In particular, according to claim 1 a matrix contains a plurality of cells. Symbols are first allocated to the respective cells such that each cell is selected by lottery and at least one combination of cells, which is (i) composed of a same number of allocated symbols as the row or column cell number and (ii) includes allocated symbols that match a first predetermined winning combination having a first predetermined rank under a predetermined condition, is aligned along a first line among lines contained in the matrix. Next, each corresponding cell becomes effective if the symbol allocated to that cell is selected by a main lottery. A benefit is provided to a player depending on a pattern of cells being effective after a predetermined number of main lotteries. If all cells with allocated symbols along the first line become effective after the predetermined number of lotteries are made, a predefined amount of disbursement or a multiplier corresponding to bets made by the player for computing an amount of disbursement

depending on the first predetermined rank, is determined.

It is respectfully submitted that Yoseloff lacks any teaching or suggestion of, for example, symbols allocated to the respective cells such that each cell is selected by lottery and at least one combination of cells includes allocated symbols that match a first predetermined winning combination having a first predetermined rank under a predetermined condition and is aligned along a first line among lines contained in the matrix. Furthermore, Yoseloff also fails to teach or suggest that cells aligned along a line and having previously allocated symbols that match a first predetermined winning combination should or could be made effective based on other lottery selections.

It is also respectfully submitted that pending claim 16, and its dependencies, are distinguishable on similar grounds.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the anticipation rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

As noted above, new claims 18-26 recite the invention in a somewhat different manner. It is believed that the patentability of new independent claims 18, and its dependency, and claim 19 should be clear from the above discussion.

New claim 20, and its dependencies (i.e. claims 21-26) recite an inventive method.

In part, claim 20 requires:

allocating symbols for the combination-making game to the respective cells in accordance with an allocation lottery such that a first combination of cells, which are (i) aligned along a first of multiple lines in the matrix and (ii) equal in number to the number of cells in each row, includes allocated symbols matching a first predetermined winning

combination with a first predetermined win rank;

performing multiple selection lotteries, after the symbols have been allocated to all of the cells forming the matrix, to select multiple different symbols; and

making effective those of the cells that have an allocated symbol matching one of the selected multiple different symbols.

It is respectfully submitted that Yoseloff lacks any teaching or suggestion of the recited allocating symbols to cells, performing multiple lotteries to select allocated symbols and making effective those cells that have allocated symbols matching the selected symbols.

Claim 20 also requires:

determining whether or not all the cells that have the first combination of allocated symbols have been made effective; and

if all the cells that have the first combination of allocated symbols are determined to have been made effective, determining a win amount based on the first predetermined win rank.

It is further respectfully submitted that Yoseloff fails to teach or suggest the recited determining of whether or not all the cells that have the first combination of allocated symbols have been made effective. Indeed, it is respectfully submitted that Yoseloff reel type system lacks any need for such a determination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 20 and its dependencies (i.e. claims 21-26) also patentably distinguish over Yoseloff.

It is further respectfully submitted that features recited in the dependent claims also distinguish over the applied prior art.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance and an early indication of the same is courteously solicited. The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone at the below listed local telephone number, in order to expedite resolution of any remaining issues and further to expedite passage of the application to issue, if any further comments, questions or suggestions arise in connection with the application.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 1227.42916X00) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,
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